

Adopt Chapter 90-200 and Section 90-200 to read:

Chapter 90-200 Supportive Transitional Emancipation Program (STEP)

90-200 STEP PURPOSE

90-200

- .1 The purpose of the Supportive Transitional Emancipation Program (STEP) is to provide financial assistance for those youth who have emancipated from the Foster Care system and are in need of financial assistance.
- .2 In administering the regulations in Chapter 90-200, the county must comply with all civil rights laws, and the rules, and regulations of Division 21. This provision also applies to contractors and subcontractors performing any and all county functions.

Authority Cited: Sections 10553 and 10554, Welfare and Institutions Code.

Reference: Section 11403.1, Welfare and Institutions Code.

Adopt Section 90-205 to read:

90-205 DEFINITIONS

90-205

The following definitions shall apply to the terms used in the STEP Program:

(a) through (c) (Reserved)

(d) (1) Dependent means a child who has been adjudged a dependent child of the court pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 300.

(e) through (k) (Reserved)

(l) (1) Legal Guardian means the individual appointed permanent or temporary guardian of the person or of the person and estate of a child by a California court pursuant to Probate Code Section 1514 or 2250, if guardianship was established prior to January 1, 1984; or Welfare and Institutions Code Section 360 or 366.26.

(m) through (q) (Reserved)

(r) (1) Relinquishment means that the child has been given up for adoption by one or both parents to a licensed public or private adoption agency or to a district adoptions office of the Department.

(s) (1) Supportive Transitional Emancipation Program – Transitional Independent Living Plan (STEP - TILP) (STEP 8, Rev. 8/02) means the document designed by the Department that outlines specific skills, education or training goals needed to facilitate a successful transition to adulthood, mutually agreed upon by eligible 18 to 21 year old emancipated foster/probation youth and the county welfare or probation department or the Independent Living Coordinator. The document will include the specific tasks youth and other relevant parties will complete in order to achieve these goals, agreed upon timelines, outcomes, and identify all individuals responsible for assisting in completion of the plan.

(t) (1) Termination of Parental Rights means that the rights of one or both parents have been involuntarily terminated as the result of an order of the court issued under Family Code Section 7800 et seq., Family Code Section 7660 et seq., or Welfare and Institutions Code Section 366.26.

(u) (Reserved)

(v) (1) Voluntary Placement means an out-of-home placement of a child by (1) the county welfare department after the parents or guardians have requested the assistance of the county welfare department and have signed a voluntary placement agreement; or

(2) the county welfare department, a licensed public or private adoption agency, or the Department acting as an adoption agency, after the parents have requested the assistance of either the county welfare department, the licensed public or private agency, or the Department acting as an adoption agency for the purpose of adoption planning, and have signed a voluntary placement agreement.

(w) (1) Ward means a child who has been adjudged a ward of the court pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 601 or 602.

(x) through (z) (Reserved)

Authority Cited: Sections 10553 and 10554, Welfare and Institutions Code.

Reference: Sections 300, 601, 602, and 11403.1(b)(1), Welfare and Institutions Code.

Adopt Section 90-210 to read:

90-210 STEP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

90-210

In order to be eligible for a STEP payment, the youth shall meet the following eligibility criteria:

.1 Age Requirement

.11 A youth meets the minimum age requirement for STEP on his or her 18th birthday. Eligibility for STEP ceases the day before the youth's 21st birthday.

.2 Emancipation from Foster Care or the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment (Kin-GAP) Program

.21 The applicant must have been receiving a Kin-GAP Payment on their 18th birthday; or

.22 The applicant must have been in Foster Care on the day before their 18th birthday and:

.221 The applicant was a court dependent; or

.222 The applicant was in a Foster Care placement pursuant to a voluntary placement agreement; or

.223 The parental rights of the parent(s) of the applicant were either relinquished or terminated involuntarily and the applicant was in a Foster Care placement; or

.224 The applicant was a ward of the court and receiving an Aid to Families with Dependent Children – Foster Care payment; or

.225 The applicant was the ward of a legal guardian and receiving a State Aid to Families with Dependent Children - Foster Care payment.

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.23 It is important to note that in most instances the funding source while the youth was in Foster Care does not affect the applicant's eligibility for STEP; so long as the applicant meets one of the conditions in Sections 90-210.221 through .223 above, the

applicant may be eligible. For example, an applicant who was a dependent of the court and receiving a CalWORKs payment, an SSI/SSP payment, or county only funding, may be eligible to participate in STEP.

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.3 Supportive Transitional Emancipation Program - Transitional Independent Living Plan (STEP - TILP) (STEP 8, Rev. 8/02)

.31 A STEP - TILP must be in place for the youth which includes educational, vocational, or other goals related to self-sufficiency.

.32 The youth must be participating in the activities identified in the STEP - TILP.

.4 Participating County

.41 The youth must have emancipated, as defined in Section 90-210.2, from a county which is participating in the STEP. If the county is not participating in the STEP, the youth is ineligible for a STEP payment.

Authority Cited: Sections 10553 and 10554, Welfare and Institutions Code.

Reference: Sections 300, 601, 602, 11363, 11401, 11403.1(a)(3), and (b), Welfare and Institutions Code.

Adopt Section 90-215 to read:

90-215 COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES

90-215

.1 County with Payment Responsibility

- .11 The county which had payment responsibility for the Foster Care or Kin-GAP child prior to emancipation shall have payment responsibility for the STEP payment if that county is participating in the STEP Program.

.2 County Responsibilities

- .21 The county with payment responsibility shall process the youth's application.
- .22 The county with payment responsibility shall prepare a STEP - TILP (STEP 8, Rev. 8/02) for each STEP youth and work with the youth to attain the goals identified in the STEP - TILP.
- .23 A redetermination of all of the STEP youth's circumstances which are subject to change shall be completed annually.
- .231 The county worker shall review the youth's STEP - TILP annually. Once the county worker has reviewed the STEP - TILP and determined that the youth is continuing to participate in the STEP - TILP as required in Section 90-210.32, the county worker will forward the STEP 2 – Referral, Transmittal, and Communication Form (STEP 2, Rev. 7/02) to the eligibility worker.
- .232 The eligibility worker shall annually review the youth's age, placement type, STEP - TILP status, and any other eligibility factors subject to change.

.3 Optional Program

.31 Participation

Participation in the STEP Program is at county option. Counties who wish to participate in the STEP Program shall file a Letter of Intent with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) no later than April 1st of each year.

.32 Program Termination

.321 Notification

Once a county has chosen to participate, it may also choose to discontinue participation. Once a county decides to discontinue STEP, they must notify CDSS 90 days prior to the proposed termination date of the county program.

.322 Youth Currently Being Served

Once a county has notified CDSS of its discontinuance of the STEP Program as required in Section 90-215.321, that county must continue to serve those youth currently participating in STEP consistent with the provisions of his or her STEP - TILP or until they are no longer age eligible for the program. The county is not required to serve any new youth.

Authority Cited: Sections 10553 and 10554, Welfare and Institutions Code.

Reference: Sections 10554, 11403.1(a)(3), (b)(2), (b)(4), (c), (g), and (g)(1), Welfare and Institutions Code.

Adopt Section 90-220 to read:

90-220 STEP RATES

90-220

- .1 Counties shall determine STEP rates in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code Section 11403.1(e).

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- .11 The STEP rate effective July 1, 2001, is \$597. (The STEP rate is the equivalent of the AFDC-FC rate for the 15 to 19 year-old age group.)

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- .2 STEP payments shall be delivered in one amount no later than the fifth of the month and shall be paid on a prospective basis.

Authority Cited: Sections 10553 and 10554, Welfare and Institutions Code.

Reference: Sections 10554 and 11403.1(e), Welfare and Institutions Code.